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Courtesy

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Courtesy

COURTESY is a virtue of inestimable value. Like a precious jewel it should be treasured. It is fundamental to the progress of civilization. As oil is to machinery, so is courtesy to the comings and goings of society. It removes the friction arising out of the contact of individuals one with another, and irons out many a rough place in the affairs of daily life.

Courtesy is prompted by a desire to be considerate of the feelings and comfort of others, which matters are leading factors in their happiness. A person who is comfortable in mind and body is likely to be happy. Courtesy helps in both respects. An affront to the feelings is resented as much as discomfort imposed upon the body.

Courtesy is closely related to unselfishness. The man in the crowd who insists on being first does so as a rule because of selfishness. The person in the street car who keeps his seat while women with babies and elderly or infirm persons stand does so because he is lacking in consideration for others. The man who persists in talking louder than everyone else and regardless of the desires of others to be heard displays a selfishness which explains his lack of courtesy.

Courtesy is no longer confined to the drawing room. It has found its way into business. It has made the business world

a better place in which to pass at least one-third of the day. Whether business courtesy be inherent, the motive for which is altruistic, or cultivated, the motive for which is mercenary, matters little. That it be present and in goodly quantity is all important.

A certain individual who was a citizen of a country with which this country was recently at war, presented to a certain firm of accountants, an application for a position on their staff. His nationality, as well as his foreign accent, if nothing else, precluded favorable consideration. He was, however, accorded an interview as requested and treated with the same courtesy as that extended to others. Rejection followed and the reasons therefor were, in a kindly way, made known to him. He told afterwards how appreciative he was of the treatment received and was loud in his praise of the firm and its policies as he had come in contact with them. He had received only the usual consideration, yet out of this incident stands forth real goodwill for the cold-blooded who must needs see something of practical business value in everything which transpires if it is to receive their approbation.

There is no such thing as too much courtesy in any business or profession; much less the profession of accountancy.

The men who have been in the forefront of the movement to promote and maintain high professional and moral standards in the profession, have been striking exponents of this desirable virtue.

In our relations with clients and their employes; in our relations with the general public; in our own organization, whether

in relation to those who supervise our work or our own subordinates; at all times and in all places, let emphasis and importance be placed upon the practice of this estimable virtue—courtesy.

Such practice is in keeping with the spirit of the holiday season.

Some Successes and Failures in Profit Sharing (Continued)

WHILE profit-sharing may be said to be native to France, it is in Great Britain that it has achieved its greatest encouragement and development.

John Stuart Mill, one of the best known and authoritative English economists, was among the first to give prominence to the idea and plead its cause. In his "Principles of Political Economy" (1848) he offers the opinion that—"the relation of masters and work-people will be gradually superseded by partnership, in one of two forms: temporarily and, in some cases, association of the labourers with the capitalist; in other cases, and perhaps finally in all, association of labourers among themselves."

Mill also describes the Leclaire "experiment," as he terms it; the scheme of the Cornish coal miners in which gangs of miners contracted with the owners to excavate certain veins in return for which they received a share in the proceeds realized from the sale of the coal; and what will be news to some readers,—the fact that in American ships trading with China in those days, every sailor had an interest in the profits of the voyage. "To this," Mill says, "has been ascribed the general good conduct of those seamen, and the extreme rarity of any collision between them and the government or people of the country."

Lord Wallscourt in 1829 started a scheme wherein the laborers who performed the work participated in the results. This can scarcely be called a profit-sharing plan. It was rather a co-operative venture.

It is thought to have been suggested to Lord Wallscourt by Robert Owen, the English social reformer, who conducted various communistic experiments in Great Britain and Ireland. Owen is generally regarded as the original Socialist. Some of his early attempts at benevolence were successful. Later, however, after his socialistic tendencies developed, his experiments failed one after another, among which was the community settlement at New Harmony, Indiana, U. S. A., where Owen lost most of his means. Like its prototype, Lord Wallscourt's co-operative venture was apparently of short duration. Information as to its duration and the cause of its failure is extremely meager.

The year 1865 saw the first real fruits of the profit-sharing propaganda in Great Britain. Henry Briggs, Son & Co., who operated coal mines near Normanton in Yorkshire, England, in that year converted the business organization from that of a firm into a limited liability company and introduced a profit-sharing scheme. A considerable portion of the stock was offered to the public with preference given to the officers, workmen, and customers of the firm. The prospectus bearing on the scheme described it as follows: "In order, however, to associate capital and labor still more intimately, the founders of the company will recommend to the shareholders that whenever the divisible profits accruing from the business shall (after the usual reservation for redemption of capital and other legitimate allowances) exceed 10 per cent. on the capital embarked,